



July 11, 2017

Dear One Center City Steering Committee,

Thank you for convening the One Center City advisory group and process to help plan for both the short-term needs and long-term vision of our center city. We understand that while the many groups represented at the advisory board and executive team have a common set of values, when it comes to tough capital decisions, often there are perceived competing interests. We understand that developing a proposal that pleases everyone is very challenging, but hope we can come to solutions for both the short- and long-term that best meets the goals identified by the group, bolstered by data wherever possible.

Overall, we support near-term solutions that can move the most people and goods safely, comfortably, and quickly to, through, and around the Center City, and are in-line with our long-term vision for downtown. We want to thank the agencies for taking a multimodal approach, as the One Center City goals can only be realized through efficient transit, building a basic bike network and improving the pedestrian experience. **However, at this point, we do not feel we have adequate information about impacts to mobility to support the complete suite of changes proposed to the One Center City advisory group.** We urge the steering committee to share data with the advisory group and interested organizations about anticipated impacts and benefits to mobility of a range of options under consideration. Given the delay of the downtown tunnel closure to buses, we should not race to a proposal until we better understand impacts.

We believe this is an opportunity for the collective agencies to be bold. Even in the short-term there are opportunities to change how people get around Seattle and the region, and we think the biggest risk is not doing enough.

We are a group of advocates that both represent individual modes but also a shared vision for a multimodal Center City. **We believe it is critical to have a safe and protected bike network that includes a facility on 4th Ave AND a set of improvements that, at a minimum, maintain existing transit speed and reliability. We cannot in good conscience support one without the other.** The current proposal provides a safe North-South bike facility, but it appears that it does not provide the speed and reliability for transit necessary to move people efficiently. More than 70 percent of downtown's estimated 247,000 daily commuters use transit, ridesharing, biking, walking and teleworking – leaving less than 30 percent of commuters to drive alone to work.¹ To move the most people, to be efficient with our tax dollars, to reflect the needs of a majority of our downtown commuters, we need to prioritize our right-of-way to enable these modes, even if it means reducing the number of general purpose lanes

¹ <https://commuteseattle.com/modesplit/>

downtown. As our Center City continues to grow we must prioritize our right of ways for the modes that move the most people, therefore we should not be prioritizing single-occupancy vehicle travel through and to our downtown.

We would like to know the options to get us to transit speed and reliability during the period of maximum constraint, while building towards a surface street network that will serve transit well into the future. What we would like now is better information on what package of additional short-term actions we can take to improve transit performance. We have heard some of the following ideas discussed, and would like to understand their efficacy (individually or in conjunction) in moving people on transit. **We would like to see a combination of these or other ideas that help us get to our minimum transit outcomes included in the short-term proposal:**

- Two red paint bus lanes on 4th Ave to facilitate moving and passing buses; one red bus lane on 5th Ave
- Restricting left turns on 4th Ave to reduce delays from protected turn phase.
- Queue jumps for transit in areas with known construction closures
- Turning either or both 5th Ave and 6th Ave into 2-way streets to give drivers more options
- Off-board transit payment on additional streets
- Plans to monitor and manage transit priority on crisis days.
- Dedicated/targeted traffic control of transit lane “hot spots” (ie; where transit gets most held up by cars in the lane)
- Re-route deadhead buses that currently use 4th Ave
- Address E/W connectivity issues to ease N/S congestion (i.e. people trying to get on I-5)
- We do not want to waste money buying expensive transit service in an effort to make up for delays on surface streets. As transit performance improves, our organizations can, however, help campaign for additional transit service that can take advantage of new transit priority.

Of course, all ideas should be reviewed with equity, affordability, accessibility and safety in mind to ensure that they do not cause any unintended or disproportionate challenges for low-income users, communities of color, or those with different accessibility needs. Identifying proper mitigation in these cases is key.

Everyone who bikes or takes the bus is also a pedestrian at some point. And although we understand that pedestrian comfort and public spaces will be addressed more prominently in the long-range actions identified, we would like to see more ideas for short-term actions that can improve pedestrian safety downtown.

- For example, as we make signal improvements throughout downtown for bikes and buses, are there additional changes that can improve pedestrian wait times and safety?
- Restricting right turns on red, adding pedestrian leading intervals, and creating more all-walk intersections have been shown to improve pedestrian safety as well. Can we target key intersections downtown for these types of improvements?
- Cars and trucks often block crosswalks, pushing pedestrians into the street. Can we commit to changes that help keep crosswalks clear?
- As the city rolls out adaptive signal technology, it should not make the pedestrian experience worse. Adaptive signal technology should be used to promote the multimodal level of service outlined in the Seattle comprehensive master plan instead of the outdated vehicular level of service.

- The pedestrian right-of-way-needs to be prioritized at construction sites, especially during this time of multiple major projects. The Director's Rule needs to be strengthened and enforced to ensure that people can walk safely past construction ideally without having to cross the street.

While we appreciate the blended approach the project team has taken in building a package of improvements, we do not feel we have enough information to speak in support of the plan as a whole. We have several questions remaining:

- What data can you provide us that the proposed opportunities will improve transit travel speed and reliability?
- What data can be shared with us that will show that the increased pedestrian traffic and truncations at hub/transfer areas won't dissuade transit ridership?
- How can we continue to prioritize transit over general purpose lanes?
- What innovative Transportation Demand Management policies, such as congestion pricing, can we easily and affordably implement?
- How are we using our streets in the center city most efficiently?
- What are the best strategies for improving transit reliability? Which are/are not being implemented in this plan and why?
- How is One Center City planning for freight mobility?

Again, we urge the steering committee to be bold and steadfast in achieving its goals for downtown, looking at innovative short-term solutions with an eye to the future. We believe that moving more people by bus, bike, and on foot is the only way to keep the Center City vibrant, and we hope that we can explore even more bold ideas for mid-term implementation that are in this spirit, such as congestion or cordon pricing. As we move forward, we have the opportunity to pilot projects, collect data, reconvene and adapt our course as necessary, and we look forward to being part of the conversation going forward.

Thank you,

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